DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 322 778 FL 018 794

AUTHOR Bottari, Piero
TITLE On the Notion of the Idiomatic Preposition: A Case Study from Italian.
PUB DATE 89
NOTE 37p.; In: York Papers in Linguistics 14; see FL 018 786.
PUB TYPE Reports - Evaluative/Feasibility (142)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Case Studies; *Grammar; *Idioms; *Italian; Language Patterns; Language Research; Linguistic Theory; *Phrase Structure; *Prepositions

ABSTRACT

Idiomatic or complex prepositions, phrases that perform the same functions as simple prepositions, are examined in Italian. The analysis is of only one subgroup of idiomatic prepositional phrases, preposition + noun, and looks for classification criteria of theoretical rather than descriptive value. It is concluded that the idiosyncratic behavior of these constructions with respect to the binding theory suggests a categorical modification corresponding to the suppression of the functional and lexical properties of the nominal head. While this conclusion is neither explanatory nor exhaustive, it appears to fix some important points for the empirical and formal identification of these idiomatic constructions and can be seen as a methodological step toward a theoretical definition of idiomaticity itself. (MSE)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED322778

ON THE NOTION OF THE IDIOMATIC PREPOSITION: A CASE STUDY FROM ITALIAN*

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

Piero Bottari

Università di Venezia

0.0 The Idiomatic Prepositional Phrase (IPP)

In many languages there are expressions which can be referred to as idiomatic prepositions or complex prepositions, that is, phrases which perform the same functions as simple prepositions. Idiomatic prepositions can be grouped into three main classes according to the types of constituent they contain:

a) adverb + preposition;
b) preposition + preposition;
c) preposition + noun.[1]

Depending on particular theoretical choices these expressions can be considered either from a synthetic point of view, that is, each of them is considered as a whole unit, or from an analytic one, emphasizing their inner constituency. As is well known from studies on the more general problems of idiomatic constructions, for some aspects neither choice is likely to be totally satisfactory because they pose a number of problems

* This article constitutes the English version of a study which appeared as Bottari (1985). The present version contains modifications and refinements with respect to the previous one. I would like to thank Guglielmo Cinque, Luigi Rizzi and participants at the XIII Convegno di Grammatica Generativa held at Trento for helpful comments. Author's correspondence address: Faculty of Foreign Languges and Literature, Università degli Studi di Venezia, Palazzi Foscar e Giustinian dei Vescovi, 30123 Venezia, Italy.

1 Cf. Regula and Jernej (1965).

York Papers in Linguistics 14 (1989) 123-158
© Piero Bottari

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
S. Harlow
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

FL018794

on the descriptive and theoretical level.[2] Instead of taking *a priori* positions on this matter and since there is very little literature on idiomatic prepositions,[3] I shall limit my present examination to a subgroup of phrases of the third class (preposition + noun), aiming to discover some classificatory criteria of theoretical import rather than trying to fix descriptive lines. Furthermore my analysis will concentrate on the Italian language, thus postponing to another occasion more extensive investigation on other languages. Exemplification here will be from Italian even though at many points examples from other languages would meet the purpose of the argumentation.

To begin with, I will adopt a specific label for the restricted class of phrases I am going to analyse. This label, Idiomatic Prepositional Phrases (IPP), at least in the first part of this article, has no particular theoretical status. IPPs have the shape of a PP (Prepositional Phrase) containing an NP whose nominal head governs another PP, as is shown in (1):

(1) $[_{PP_1}\ P_1\ [_{NP_1}\ N_1\ [_{PP_2}\ P_2\ NP_2]]]$

Either the sequence P_1 - N_1 or the sequence P_1 - N_1 - P_2 (a definite choice makes no difference for the moment) is the IPP. This IPP has the function of assigning a semantic role to NP_2 in ways that happen to be independent or partly independent of the lexical content of N_1. This is shown in the sentences of (2), where the italics marking the IPPs are to be taken as a descriptive convention void of any theoretical or classificatory content: [4]

---

2 Among the many works on the subject the following ones are frequently referred to: Chafe (1968), Gaatone (1981), Fraser (1970), Katz (1973), Ruwet (1983).

3 As far as I know Gaatone (1976) and Gross (1981) are the only works which treat this problem directly.

4 Cf. Bottari (1985) for a more detailed analysis.

(2) a. Gianni aveva fatto tutto ciò *a* *vantaggio di* Maria
Gianni had done all that to (the) advantage of Maria

b. Carlo fece un assegno *a favore di* un suo
Carlo wrote-out a cheque in favour of one (of) his

dipendente
employees

c. Luciano aveva accettato l'offerta *a* *discapito della*
Luciano had accepted the offer to (the) prejudice of-the

carriera del suo collega più affezionato
career of his closest colleague

d. Giovanni si ruppe una gamba *a causa di* Maria
Giovanni broke his leg on account of Maria

e. Quel giudice fu molto ingiusto *nei riguardi del*
that judge had-been very unfair with respect to-the

contrabbandiere
smuggler

f. Carlo odiava tutti *all' infuori di* Maria
Carlo hated everyone with-the exception of Maria

g. Piero non stimava nessuno *ad* *eccezione del* suo
Pietro didn't esteem anybody with (the) exception of his

principale
principal

h. Fellini ebbe dei ripensamenti *in merito a* quell'attore
Fellini had some afterthoughts with regard to that actor

i. Gustavo era stato licenziato *all'insaputa* *dei* suoi
Gustavo had been dismissed without the knowledge of his

colleghi
colleagues

j. Il ministro era partito per la Cina *su* *proposta del*
the minister had left for China at the proposal of-the

presidente
president

k. L'uccisione di Cesare *da parte di* Bruto
the killing of Caesar by Brutus

l. Gianluigi mi stava aspettando *di fronte al* palazzo
Gianluigi was waiting for me in front of-the building

m. Avevo una cattiva opinione *al* *riguardo di* quella faccenda
I-had a bad opinion with regard to that matter

0.1 Further Characteristics of IPPs

One of the most significant properties of the IPPs - one that traditionally (though not satisfactorily, as we shall see) is assumed as the prominent classificatory feature for idiomatic prepositions (cf. Regula and Jernej 1965) - is the obligatory presence of a PP after the noun (N_1 in (1)) as the unacceptability of (3) shows:

(3) a. *Carlo partecipò all' impresa commerciale a
Carlo took-part in-the trading enterprise to (the)

vantaggio
advantage

b. ?Giovanni si ruppe una gamba a causa
Giovanni broke his leg on account

c. ??Quel giudice fu molto ingiusto nei riguardi
that judge had-been very unfair with regard

A second source of idiosyncrasies is provided by the invariability with respect to number of the N_1 in many IPPs:

(4) a. *Carlo fece ciò a vantaggi di Luigi
Carlo did it to (the) advantage of Luigi

b. *Mi dissero parecchie cose a riguardi di Luigi
They-told me many things with regards to Luigi

Another important aspect of these constructions is the fact that the N_1 contained in some of them does not occur - or does not occur any more - in free contexts. Among the examples in (2), N_1s of this type are *infuori* 'exception', *insaputa* 'lack of knowledge', and, to a certain extent, *discapito* 'prejudice'. Analogously, there are N_1s which, even though occurring in free contexts, take on a different and unique meaning when employed in IPPs. In the examples seen in (2) this is the case with *riguardi* 'regards', *riguardo* 'regard', *parte* 'part' and *merito* 'regard'. Parallel observations can be made with regard to the variability of the lexical and categorial selection of an N_1 according to whether it occurs in an IPP or in other contexts. Thus, PPs like those in (5), (7), and (9) are acceptable while PPs like those in (6), (8) and (10) are not: [4]

(5) a. Col vantaggio di Pietro su Carlo
with-the advantage of Pietro over Carlo

b. Col suo vantaggio su Carlo
with his advantage over Carlo

(6) a. *A vantaggio di Pietro su Carlo
to (the) advantage of Pietro over Carlo

b. *A suo vantaggio su Carlo
to his advantage over Carlo

(7) Parlò a lungo sui vantaggi dell' iniziativa per Piero
he-spoke at length of-the advantages of-the enterprise for Piero

(8) *Parlò a lungo a vantaggio dell' iniziativa per
he-spoke at length to (the) advantage of-the enterprise for

Piero
Piero

(9) Parlò a lungo sui vantaggi di Piero nell'
he-spoke at length on (the) advantages of Piero in-the

iniziativa
enterprise

(10) *Parlò a lungo a vantaggio di Piero nell'
he-spoke at length to (the) advantage of Piero in-the

iniziativa
enterprise

To these, other aspects could be added, perhaps following the nine descriptive criteria (or idiosyncrasies) proposed in Quirk et. al. (1972). But the sparse observations so far made are sufficient to show that the presence of IPPs in Italian (as well as in other languages) may be held to be uncontroversial. The real difficulties arise when one tries to define exactly what an IPP is.

1.0 Towards a Definition of IPPs: Theoretical Problems

1.1 Possible Approaches

A complete survey of PPs showing idiosyncratic behaviour would give both a list of idiosyncrasies and a list of PPs. The question to be asked at this point is whether there are reasons to consider these PPs to be a special class (i.e. IPPs). Surely there are scarce theoretical reasons to do so since the label 'idiomatic preposition' has no theoretical status. Indeed, the notion of 'idiomatic preposition', unlike other categorial and functional notions, cannot be easily understood simply by considering distributional phenomena.

From a purely 'logical' point of view, the possible definition of an idiomatic preposition has three possible forms: a) the idiomatic preposition is the locus of some specific idiosyncrasies (that is, certain idiosyncrasies but not others are considered the relevant features of idiomaticity; e.g. the absence of a definite article could be included in them while adjectival modification could be excluded, or vice versa); b) the idiomatic preposition is the locus of ALL the idiosyncrasies (that is, given a set of idiosyncrasies distinctly observed in several IPPs, only the IPPs that show all the idiosyncrasies are to be considered idiomatic prepositions); c) it is sufficient to present one idiosyncrasy for a PP to be included among the IPPs.

As will be seen in a moment the first of these definitions, besides being arbitrary in nature since every set of idiosyncrasies will result from a scarcely motivated choice, gives contrasting results according to the types of idiosyncrasy that happen to be chosen. The second one is nothing more than an idealized construct and even supposing that it worked for some IPPs, it would turn out to be of little use since it would overlook important differences among the idiomatic constructions and, most important of all, a whole series of 'gradient' phenomena. 'Gradient phenomena' as we will see in detail below are phenomena which rather than splitting the IPPs into discrete categories (say plain PPs v prepositions), seem to range them along a continuum or a scale of several steps having plain PPs and lexicalized IPPs (= prepositions)

at either end and a whole series of IPPs whose status is uncertain in between. As to the third possibility, it may certainly work on a broad descriptive level, but it is of no use for both a finer classification and a theoretical account. To show these points in some detail let us note that the 'classical' definition of an idiomatic preposition (the obligatory presence of an NP argument) would mean that *in merito (a)* 'with regard to', and *al riguardo (di)* 'with regard to' would have to be excluded from the categorial class on the basis of the acceptability of (11) and (12):

(11) Fellini ebbe dei ripensamenti in merito
Fellini had some afterthoughts with regard

(12) Quel giudice fu molto ingiusto al riguardo
that judge had-been very unfair with-the regard

Similar difficulties arise if one tries to establish other specific criteria on which to base a definition of IPPs. The problems seem to surround the abstract notion of idiomaticity. Consider, for instance, a definition of IPPs based on the intuition that the more idiomatic a construction is, the more it resembles the single word with respect to form, behaviour, and content. According to this approach it might be possible to adopt the well known distinctive criterion for composition and derivation employed in morphology and split the IPPs into those that contain nominal heads without independent existence and those containing nominal heads also occurring in free contexts; only the second type of IPP should then belong to the class of idiomatic prepositions. In the terms of this analysis however items such as *a vantaggio (di)* 'to the advantage of', *a favore (di)* 'to the advantage of', *a causa (di)* 'on account of', *ad eccezione (di)* 'with the exception of', *su proposta (di)* 'at the proposal of', and *di fronte (a)* 'in front of' should be excluded from the class of IPPs because the N_1's they contain have a productive independent usage - an unsatisfactory decision since other defining criteria would treat these constructions as idioms.

On a more general level, the preceding criterion reveals itself to be unsatisfactory because, on the one hand, it is not easy to state which words belong to the Italian language and which ones do not; on the

other hand, this criterion can only operate in an absolute manner and cannot account for gradiency.

To account for gradiency, other criteria could be sought. These criteria which might be referred to under the general heading of 'crystallization', would reflect a general principle or idea that the more idiomatic an expression (i.e. an IPP) is, the less variable its internal structure. The variations would include modifications of several types, such as adjectival modification, flexional modification, and so on, that is phenomena which undermine the inner cohesion of an expression in some way by assigning lexical autonomy to its constituents.

It goes without saying that the defining content of 'crystallization' is highly circular, but putting aside matters of theoretical import for the moment, 'crystallization' is scarcely adequate even for descriptive purposes. On the one hand, it gives contrasting predictions. For instance, if we consider the examples in (2), a criterion distinguishing idiomatic prepositions from plain PPs on the basis of the absence of determiners for the N^1 would produce unwanted breaks among the class of IPPs: an IPP like *all'infuori (di)* 'to the exception of', for instance, would be rejected by this criterion in spite of the fact that other criteria of the same type would class it among the idiomatic prepositions. Similarly, a criterion based on the absence of adjectival modification would overlook important differences related to the kind of modifier and the particular constructions in which it occurs, as (13) and (14) show:

(13) a. Mi licenziai a tutto vantaggio di Carlo
I resigned to (the) full advantage of Carlo

b. *Mi licenziai con tutto vantaggio per Carlo
I resigned with (the) full advantage for Carlo

(14) a. *Mi licenziai a grande vantaggio di Carlo
inaspettato
apprezzabile
.....

	I resigned to (the)	great unexpected appreciable	advantage of Carlo
b.	Mi licenziai con	grande inaspettato apprezzabile	vantaggio per Carlo
	I resigned with (the)	great unexpected appreciable	advantage for Carlo

The mirror-image situation shown by these examples seems to indicate that there are stronger restrictions on the types of adjectives that may enter into a construction with the IPP *a vantaggio (di)* 'to (the) advantage of' than on the types of adjectives that may enter into constructions with the IPP *con vantaggio (per)* 'with (the) advantage for'. Of course, further investigation would have to explain this behaviour, but, for what concerns us here it only has to be observed that any explanation whatever has to be based on both a theoretical account of the behaviour of the adjectives involved and the acknowledgement of a radical difference between two IPPs.

Clearly there could be certain criteria of 'crystallization' that might produce unquestionable results as regards the discovery of idiosyncratic PPs (cf. point (c) above), but these observations would be too general to be used as classificatory tools or - what is worse - as theoretical tools: they would, in fact, provide no hint to possible differentiations among the broad class of IPPs that could be individuated. Criteria of this kind, for instance, are the rigorous invariability of the N_i or what we might term the 'pronominalized N' criterion, shown in the following examples:

(15) a. *Carlo era stato molto scortese nei riguardi$_i$ di Mario,
Carlo had been very rude with respect(s) to Mario,

Lucia lo era stata in quelli$_i$ di Rodolfo
Lucia (it) had been with those of Rodolfo

b. *Erano partiti tutti all' infuori$_i$ di Carlo mentre
Everybody had-left with-the exception of Carlo while

a quello$_i$ di Luigi nessuno era arrivato sano
with that of Luigi nobody had arrived safely

(Notice, incidentally, that this criterion is only valid for PPs whose nominal component is modified by a definite article, as required by the properties of the demonstrative pronouns).

The preceding observations should suffice to show that classificatory criteria based on phenomena characterizable in distributive and superficial ways not only give results which are scarcely interesting if not contradictory - an indication of descriptive inadequacy - but they do not even suggest the direction research should take for a sufficiently coherent account of the variety of the behaviour of the IPPs.

1.2 The Theoretical Approach

In contrast to descriptive approaches, a theoretical account[5] of the IPPs will reject general labels such as 'idiomatic preposition', and start directly with an examination of the particular idiosyncrasies characterizing these constructions trying to trace them back to general principles governing the whole grammar, that is, principles that can be thought of as

[5] Of course, the choice between a theoretical approach and a descriptive one depends on more general and deep aims, such as those represented in Chomsky's recent dichotomy between 'Internal-language' and 'External-language' (Chomsky 1986a), which Ambrosini, following the Saussurian idea of *langage*, has extended to a broader notion of "theoretical linguistics" vs other branches of of linguistic studies (Ambrosini 1987), but it is interesting to note that in the case of IPPs (and, perhaps, in the case of idiomatic constructions in general) a mere descriptivism turns out to be defective.

part of a substantive representation of the actual linguistic knowledge of the speaker. This means that the idiosyncrasies of IPPs have to be considered in conjunction with other empirical phenomena and in particular those phenomena that have received satisfactory explanations in some theoretical model. In the remaining part of this survey I will try to provide an outline of what this strategy might be like by taking into account possible characterizations of the categorial nature of a group of IPPs. The properties of anaphoric and pronominal reference as they are dealt with in the Government and Binding version of Generative Grammar (Chomsky 1981) will constitute the main tool for the investigation. The characterization stemming from the anomalous behaviour of these IPPs certainly will not exhaust all the possibilities of analysis - at the logico-semantic level, indeed, there seem to be many lines of research to be followed, as, for instance, the interesting contrasts between (13) and (14) clearly show. In this sense, what follows is simply meant as an illustrative attempt rather than a definitive account, something which justifies the concision of some of the argumentation. However it is considered that the general line of argumentation adopted here is fruitful and when fully worked out it will perhaps yield important theoretical insights.

1.2.1 Introduction to Binding theory and the Binding theory test

The distinctive character of the Binding theory consists in treating semantic phenomena in terms of syntactic configurations - an approach which turns out to be particularly useful for the definition of the categorial status of the IPPs. The semantic phenomena Binding theory deals with are the possible references that different types of NP may take, with particular regard to NPs which do not denote objects or entities in a direct way but which refer to other NPs in the linguistic string or to other elements in the pragmatic context. The syntactic configurations pertaining to Binding theory - that is, the 'Binding domains' - are specific maximal projections (NP and S, as we will see) which bound the possibilities of reference for certain types of NPs that they contain.

Binding theory, then, consists of a classification of the NPs in terms of the different properties they show as regards their possible references as well as consisting of a definition of the forms and the restrictions on the assignment of reference in terms of binding domains. Thus, following the synthesis of Binding theory put forward in Radford (1981), let us assume a classification of NPs into anaphors, pronominals, and lexical NPs (or R-expressions in the terms of Chomsky 1981). An anaphor is an NP that cannot have independent reference and which takes its reference from some other expression in the sentence: its antecedent. Typical English anaphors are the reflexive *himself, herself*, etc., and the reciprocal *each other*. The pronominals (personal pronouns *he, she* etc., possessive *his, her*, etc.), like the anaphors, have no independent reference but, unlike the anaphors, either get their reference from some NP in the sentence or get it in the pragmatic context as is shown by the different indices of *he* in (16) (where identical indices mean identical reference):

(16) $John_i$ thinks $he_{i/j}$ is clever

Finally, the lexical NPs or R-expressions are NPs with independent reference, that is, NPs that, like *John* in (16) need no (syntactic or pragmatic) antecedent.

The forms of the assignment of references (or 'referential indices') are expressed in the three conditions of the Binding theory, which also constitute a finer definition for the corresponding types of NPs:

(17) **Binding theory**

A. An anaphor is bound in its governing category
B. A pronominal is free in its governing category
C. An R-expression is free

To understand (17) a formal apparatus is necessary that I draw from Radford (1981) (to which I refer the reader for further details):

(18) a. X is *bound* if X is an argument coindexed with an argument c-commanding it; if X is not bound then it is free

b. An *argument* is an NP position in S or NP (subject, direct object, indirect object, etc.)

c. X *c-commands* Y if the first branching node dominating X dominates Y and neither X dominates Y nor Y dominates X

d. X is the *governing category* for Y if X is the least NP or the least S containing a governor for Y

e. X *governs* Y if X is the least potential governor (= V, P, N, A, and TENSE) c-commanding Y and there are no S-bar or NP boundaries between X and Y

Consider then the following sentences:

(19) a. $John_i$ hurt $himself_i$

b. $John_i$ hurt her_j

c. $John_i$ hurt $Fred_j$

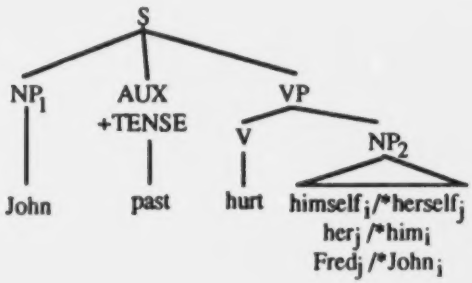
(20) a. *$John_i$ hurt $herself_j$

b. *$John_i$ hurt him_i

c. *$John_i$ hurt $John_i$

These sentences have the (simplified) structure (21), which explicitly shows the c-command and government relations:

(21)



S is the governing category of NP_2; NP_1 can be a possible binder for NP_2 since it c-commands NP_2. The predictions of the Binding theory (17), then, are entirely met by the examples in (19) and (20). Of course the Binding theory does not tell us how pronominals get their reference in cases like (19b) and others of the same type; or how it is possible that in a sequence like *Napoleon was defeated at Waterloo; however the general did not give up at all, Napoleon* and *the general* are interpreted as referring to the same person. Indeed, as regards pronominals and R-expressions at least, the theory simply predicts which references are impossible in which contexts. What is particularly interesting, however, is the fact that the Binding theory (17) establishes a complementary distribution of anaphors and pronominals as is well shown in the contrasts (19a/b) and (20a/b). Now, as far as our survey of IPPs is concerned, it is worth noting that, if it is correct to assume that the binding domains are NP and S and not, for instance, PP, as (22) and (23) clearly show

(22) a. $John_i$ did it [pp for himself$_i$]

b. *$John_i$ did it [pp for him_i]

(23) a. *$John_i$ told Mary that [s Katy did it [s for himself$_i$]

b. $John_i$ told Mary that [s Katy did it [s for him_i]

it is correct to infer that, whenever an anaphor and a pronominal show complementary distribution with respect to an identical antecedent there is an NP or S boundary between them. This prediction also obtains in the revised version of the Binding theory that I shall assume in the present work (see below), at least in so far as the unacceptability of a certain index for a pronominal predicts the presence of an S or NP boundary between the pronominal and its antecedents.

1.2.2 The Binding theory test over a group of IPPs

The IPPs I am going to analyse have the form of a PP headed by *in* 'in' or *a* 'to' and containing a nominal head which governs a PP that is al-

ways headed by *di* 'of'; they include forms like *a vantaggio (di)* 'to the advantage of', *a favore (di)* 'to the advantage of', *in favore (di)* 'to the advantage of', *al posto (di)* 'in the place of', *a discapito (di)* 'to the prejudice of', *a danni (di)* 'to the prejudice of' etc.[6] All these IPPs manifest identical behaviour with respect to anaphoric elements (*se stesso* 'himself', *se stessa*, 'herself', etc.; *proprio* 'his own', *propria* 'her own', etc.) and pronominal elements (*lui* 'him', *lei* 'her' etc; *suo* 'his', *sua* 'her'). Thus we can assume the following paradigm as valid for all of them: [7]

(24) a. Gianni$_i$ aveva fatto tutto ciò *a vantaggio di se stesso$_i$*
Gianni had done all that to (the) advantage of himself

b. *Gianni$_i$ aveva fatto tutto ciò *a vantaggio di lui$_i$*
Gianni had done all that to (the) advantage of him

c. Giannii aveva fatto tutto ciò *a vantaggio di lei*
Gianni had done all that to (the) advantage of her

d. Gianni$_i$ aveva fatto tutto ciò *a suo$_i$ vantaggio*
Gianni had done all that to his advantage

e. Gianni$_i$ aveva fatto tutto ciò *a vantaggio suo$_i$*
Gianni had done all that to (the) advantage his

---

[6] Many types of IPPs are then excluded from the analysis, as, for instance, those having a locative meaning (*di fronte (a)* 'in front of', *in capo (a)* 'at the head of', etc.) or IPPs like *alla maniera (di)* 'in the manner of', *a differenza (di)* 'differently from' to which the Binding theory test is inapplicable. This empirical restriction, of course, cannot affect the results of the present article, whose purposes are not descriptive but methodological.

[7] As to the judgements on the examples I will propose from now on, there are significant variations among native speakers of Italian. To overcome this difficulty I tested the paradigm on a certain number of informants: the variations I registered never affected sentences of the type (30a-c) (which I tested for the full group of IPPs), a fact that will appear to be crucial in the argumentation to follow.

f. Gianni aveva fatto tutto ciò *a proprio vantaggio*
Gianni had done all that to his own advantage

g. Gianni aveva fatto tutto ciò *a vantaggio proprio*
Gianni had done all that to advantage his own

The paradigm (24) can be split into two subgroups of sentences according to the categorial labelling (25):

(25) ...[$_{PP}$ a [$_{NP}$ vantaggio [$_{PP}$ di NP_1]]]

which represents the underlined part of (24a-c), and the categorial labelling (26):

(26) ...[$_{PP}$ a [$_{NP}$ (suo/proprio) vantaggio (suo/proprio)]]

which represents the underlined part of (24d-g). These categorial representations will be modified or will appear to be open to objection at the end of the discussion, but, for a preliminary analysis, they stand as the most obvious starting point.

Let us then proceed by assuming Chomsky's (1986a) version of the Binding theory which represents a modification of the theory I have illustrated in 1.2.1, even though it keeps the central ideas of the Binding theory intact. Contrary to previous versions of the theory which were only able to account for simple alternations between pronominal elements and anaphors,[8] Chomsky's proposal can easily deal with cases like (27), where a pronominal element and an anaphor bearing the same index occur in an identical context:

(27) a. The boys$_i$ saw [$_{NP}$ their$_i$ pictures]

[8] The literature on the subject amounts to a few titles. Cf. Belletti (1978), Cinque (1981), Giorgi (1985), and Giorgi and Longobardi (in press), for further references also.

b. The boys$_i$ saw [$_{NP}$ each other's$_i$ pictures]

In order to overcome the difficulties that a version of the Binding theory like that in (17) encounters in sentences like (27) (namely, the fact that only (a) satisfies the requirements of (17) while (b) shows the acceptability of an anaphor bound from outside its governing category) Chomsky disjoins the complementary distribution of anaphors and pronominals from the Binding theory proper and posits separate requirements for any one of the three types of NP involved in the theory; in particular, he tries to formalize the property that anaphors show of taking antecedents outside the minimal NP or S dominating them. The formal apparatus Chomsky elaborates to account for the observed phenomena reaches a high degree of complexity. The reasons for this are to be sought not only in the requisites arising from empirical observations but also - and perhaps, mainly - in some new general issues stemming from the reflections on the theoretical status of the generative model. The new format of the theory consists of the definitions (28) and (29) plus the definition of 'Complete Functional Complex' which I quote directly from Chomsky (1986a).

Assuming an indexing I, an element α, a local domain β, and a lexical category γ governing α, Chomsky advances the following formulae:

(28) I is Binding Theory-compatible with (α,β) if

A. α is an anaphor and is bound in β under I
B. α is a pronominal and in free in β under I
C. α is an R-expression and is free in β under I

(29) **Licensing Condition**

For some α such that (i) or (ii), I is Binding Theory compatible with (α, β):

> i) α is an R-expression ...
>
> ii) α is an anaphor or a pronominal and β is the least Complete Functional Complex (CFC) containing γ for which there is an indexing J, Binding Theory compatible with (α, β)

The concept of Complete Functional Complex is defined in terms of the Government theory and the Extended Projection Principle:

> A governing category [for α] is a maximal projection containing both a subject and a lexical category governing α (hence containing α). A governing category is a 'complete functional complex' in the sense that all grammatical functions compatible with its head are realized in it - the complements necessarily, by the projection principle, and the subject, which is optional unless required to license a predicate, by definition (Chomsky 1986a: 169)

In informal terms the sense of these formulae is that the relevant binding domain for an anaphor or a pronominal is a sentential domain, which means either NP or S, and more importantly, that this domain need not be the same for both categories. The binding domain for pronominals is always a very restricted one because it serves the purpose of excluding unwanted coindexations. The binding domain for the anaphors, even if it remains constrained in various ways, happens to be larger than the binding domain for the pronominal elements since the anaphors can only be coindexed with an element in the sentence, in other words, if an anaphor finds no coreferent in the minimal NP or S dominating it, the coreferent has to be searched for outside those categories (with due limitations). Thus, contrary to previous versions of the theory, (27b) is accounted for by simply assuming the whole S as the minimal binding domain for the anaphor *each other* just because NP, a possible binding domain too, contains no indexing, hence no indexing which is Binding Theory-compatible with *each other*. In (27a), instead, NP functions as the minimal binding domain for the pronominal *their* for exactly the same reason: it contains no indexing for *their*, which, thus, is free in terms of an indexing I as required by condition (B) of

(28). In connection with the present article and what I have observed in the final part of 1.2.1, it is important to stress the fact that in this new version the predictive power of the Binding theory as to the categorial environment has been modified only with respect to anaphors and not with respect to pronominals: an unacceptable indexing for a pronominal still implies that the pronominal is bound in the minimal NP or S dominating it.

Let us now turn to the examples in (24), considering (a), (b), and (c) first. The version of the Binding Theory we are assuming predicts the acceptability of all the three sentences since the pronominal elements and the anaphors occur in a context which is analogous to the one in (27). The ungrammaticality of (24b), then, remains problematic for the Binding Theory and mysterious too, considering that this theory seems to be perfectly adequate in dealing with analogous empirical contexts such as (30):

(30) Marco$_i$ ci fece avere [$_{NP}$ quella descrizione di lui$_i$]
Marco let us have that description of him

The contrast between (24b) and (30) suggests that the solution should not be sought in possible modifications of the Binding Theory, nor is it to be sought in the binding phenomena generally, but somewhere else. What is still more amazing in this respect is the full acceptability of (24d and e). These sentences, for the purposes of the Binding Theory, show a categorial context which is identical to the one in (24b) (that is, the NP functions as the minimal binding domain for the pronominal elements *lui* 'him' and *suo* 'his'); this time, however, the indexing is acceptable, just as the Binding Theory predicts. Now, any hypothetical modification of the Binding Theory to account for the unacceptability of (24b) - namely, an extension of the binding domain to the whole S - not only would have to be justified on general grounds, but would also have to explain this contrast. Such an attempt would be contradictory since it would result in a theory predicting the possibility and impossibility of occurrence of the same element in the same type of context.

If these conclusions are correct, then, we can rightly say that the solution to the problems raised by the unacceptability of (24b) are to be sought outside the Binding Theory or outside the binding phenomena generally. The possibilities that come to mind are of two types: a) reinterpreting the categorial representation of (24b) so as to meet the requirements of Binding Theory; b) looking for other grammatical restrictions that disallow the pronominal element in (24b) independently of the predictions of the Binding Theory. The first solution could encounter difficulties both in justifying any decision on categorial interpretation for (24b) that would differ from the most intuitive one (namely, the one shown in (25)) and in justifying its inapplicability to other sentences of the paradigm (24), that is, (24d, e) and, perhaps, (24a, f, g). A solution of the second type would avoid all these difficulties since no categorial rearrangement would be implied in it, a simple justification of the impossibility of having a pronoun in a structure like (24b) being sufficient. The sole problem would be the acceptability of (24c) which contains a pronoun in a context similar to that of (24b); however, if this difficulty were overcome, it would turn out that IPPs like *a vantaggio (di)* 'to (the) advantage of' are in no way different from plain PPs – a crucial conclusion which would strongly weaken the idea that there should be PPs having a 'special' idiomatic status, that is, idiomatic PPs.

1.3 Possible Solutions

A solution of the second type alluded to in the previous subsection seems to be readily at hand. In Italian, as in other languages, *di* + pronominal sequences, and *di* + anaphor sequences or, more generally, sequences of the type *di* + non-Referential expression are not allowed to occur freely where they can be substituted by an appropriate possessive element (which still bears pronominal or anaphoric features). This restriction, which I shall call the Possessive Generalization for lack of a more suitable theoretical label,[8] is responsible for the ungrammaticality of the sentences in (31) and (32), which, of course, will become grammatical as is shown in (33) and (34), when the *di* + pronominal/anaphor sequence is substituted with the appropriate possessive element, *suo*

'his' in (31) and *proprio/propria* 'his/her own' in (32),[9] that is, when the Possessive Generalization has been applied:

(31) a. */?? Mauro$_i$ chiamò il cane di lui$_{i/j}$
Mauro$_i$ called the dog of him$_{i/j}$

b. */? L' ambasciatore$_i$ confermò la partenza di lui$_{i/j}$
the ambassador$_i$ confirmed the leaving of him$_{i/j}$

c. */?? Carlo$_i$ pagò la telefonata di lui$_{i/j}$
Carlo$_i$ paid (for) the 'phone call of him$_{i/j}$

(32) a. *Mauro chiamò il cane di se stesso
Mauro called the dog of himself

b. *L' ambasciatore confermò la partenza di se stesso
the ambassador confirmed the leaving of himself

c. *Carlo pagò la telefonata di se stesso
Carlo paid (for) the 'phone call of himself

(33) a. Mauro chiamò il suo cane
Mauro called (the) his dog

b. L' ambasciatore confermò la sua partenza
the ambassador confirmed (the) his leaving

c. Carlo pagò la sua telefonata
Carlo paid (the) his 'phone call

(34) a. Mauro chiamò il proprio cane
Mauro called (the) his own dog

---

[9] The judgements of informants are not uniform for the examples in (31), especially for (31b) (cf. Bottari 1985 for explanations). These variations, however, are quite independent from the indexes the pronominal can bear (thus there is no relationship between the alternating symbols in front of the examples and the alternating indexes).

b. L' ambasciatore confermò la propria partenza
the ambassador confirmed (the) his own leaving

c. Carlo pagò la propria telefonata
Carlo paid (for) (the) his own 'phone call

On the basis of these facts, then, the ungrammaticality of (24b) could be accounted for without resorting to binding phenomenology. This solution, however, cannot be considered a viable one since it raises too many problems and some overt contradictions. Let us consider them in turn.

As (31) shows, the Possessive Generalization operates independently of the index of the pronominal, but this fact openly contrasts with the acceptability of (24c) (which I repeat) and, even more crucially, with the acceptability of (35), identical to (24b) in all but the index of the pronominal:

(24)c. Gianni aveva fatto tutto ciò *a vantaggio di lei*
Gianni had done all that to (the) advantage of her

(35) Gianni$_i$ aveva fatto tutto ciò *a vantaggio di lui*$_j$
Gianni$_i$ had done all that to (the) advantage of him$_j$

Another crucial fact is represented by the acceptability of (24a), repeated here

(24) a. Gianni$_i$ aveva fatto tutto ciò *a vantaggio di se stesso*$_i$
Gianni$_i$ had done all that to (the) advantage of himself$_i$

which now becomes problematical given the unacceptability of the sentences in (32).

The Possessive Generalization does not, then, seem to serve the purpose of justifying the strange behaviour of *a vantaggio (di)* 'to (the) advantage of' in (24). However, before abandoning this solution, let us consider some possible ways out of the difficulties we have just ob-

served: their ultimate ineffectiveness will simply reinforce the conclusions we have come to. To put it briefly, there are conditions or contexts which block the application of the Possessive Generalization: if it turned out that there are reasons to suspend the application of the Possessive Generalization in (24a, c) and (35) but not in (24b), the whole account could be kept as valid. As Cinque (1980, 1981) has demonstrated in detail, the Possessive Generalization applies only optionally or does not apply at all depending on the type of nominal head, when the *di* + non-R-expression sequence functions as the 'object' of the NP.[10] The NPs in (36) are indeed acceptable under this interpretation:

(36) a. Il desiderio di lui
the desire of him

b. La descrizione di lui
the description of him

c. Il ritratto di lui
the portrait of him

Nouns of the type of *vantaggio* 'advantage', however, do not seem to select an 'object' argument, as the unacceptability of (37) shows

(37) */?? Discutemmo i vantaggi di lui
we-discussed the advantages of him

(see similar examples with anaphors also below).

---

[10] To be more precise, it should be said that a *di* + non-R-expression sequence can freely occur under the N-bar level of an X-bar projection of N. As recent studies have shown, it is inappropriate to call this position the 'object' position of NP since there are intransitive nouns like *partenza* 'leaving/departure' which head an NP whose seeming subject is to be interpreted as generated in this position. These nouns parallel the corresponding verbs which, in the literature, after Burzio (1981), are referred to as 'ergative' verbs. On what we may call 'ergative nominals' see the pioneering article of Cinque (1981) and recent research in Giorgi (1985), Giorgi and Longobardi (in press), and Bottari (1985).

Another possibility of suspending the application of the Possessive Generalization has been pointed out by Belletti (1978). Belletti's detailed study shows that when a *di* + pronominal sequence[10] can disambiguate a sentence by means of the overt gender features contained in the pronoun (and absent in the corresponding possessive) the Possessive Generalization does not apply even if the pronominal element does not cover an 'object' function:

(38) a. Mauro chiamò il cane di lui non quello di lei
Mauro called the dog of him not the one of her

b. *Mauro chiamò il suo cane non il suo
Mauro called his dog not hers

Similarly, as has been observed by Giorgi (1985), the Possessive Generalization does not apply when the pronominal element (or the anaphor) is followed by an appositive expression:

(39) a. Gianni detesta quel giudice di lui piccolo che lo fece
Gianni loathes that judge of him when a child who had him

mettere in riformatorio
put in (a) reformatory

b. Maria detesta gli ammiratori di lei in costume da bagno
Maria loathes the admirers of her in bathing suits

Again nouns like *vantaggio* 'advantage' do not conform to these requirements or possibilities when they occur in IPPs, or, at least, they do not when the pronominal element is coindexed with the subject of the sentence:

(40) a. Gianni$_i$ aveva fatto tutto ciò a vantaggio di lui$_{*i/j}$ e
Gianni$_i$ had done all that to (the) advantage of him$_{*i/j}$ and

dei suoi familiari
of his relatives

b. Gianni$_i$ aveva fatto tutto ciò a vantaggio di lui$_{*i/j}$ non
Gianni$_i$ had done all that to (the) advantage of him$_{*i/j}$ not

di lei
of her

c. Saragat$_i$ aveva fatto tutto ciò a vantaggio di lui$_{*i/j}$,
Saragat$_i$ had done all that to (the) advantage of him$_{*i/j}$,

futuro presidente della Reppublica
future president of the Republic

Finally, anaphors seem to escape less easily from the effects of the Possessive Generalization than do pronominal elements. In short, a *di* + anaphor sequence cannot be accepted when it functions as 'subject' of NP, even in contexts where the relaxation of the Possessive Generalization might be possible: [11]

(41) a. *Gianni pagò l' appartamento di se stesso non quello di
Gianni paid (for) the flat of himself not that of

sua madre
his mother

b. *Greta Garbo andava fiera dell' interpretazione di se stessa in
Greta Garbo was proud of the interpretation of herself in

costume da bagno[12]
(a) bathing suit

---

[11] According to the observations in footnote 10, it should be said that inside an NP a *di* + anaphor sequence can only occupy a position dominated by an N-bar node. For a more detailed account of this restriction cf. Bottari (1985); for an explanation based on further observations on the nature of the anaphors see Graffi (1987).

[12] Of course, (45)b is acceptable under the reading *Greta Garbo interprets Greta Garbo in a bathing suit.*

The problem, as observed in footnote 11, is too complex to be fully illustrated here, but, even this brief survey will suffice to show that a sentence like (24a) cannot be accounted for following this line of argument. Indeed, nouns like *vantaggio* 'advantage' or others occurring in the IPPs we are considering, when employed in unmarked NPs behave exactly like *telefonata* 'phone call' (see 32c) and *interpretazione* 'interpretation' (see 41b) in so far as they do not accept a *di* + anaphor sequence, which, presumably (or consequently) is to be interpreted as the 'subject' of the NP: [13]

(42) a. *Mario ci aveva parlato dei
Mario had spoken to us of the

vantaggi/danni/favori/meriti di se stesso
advantages/damages/favours/merits of himself

b. *Carlo parlò dei vantaggi di se stesso non di quelli di
Carlo spoke of the advantages of himself not of those of

Giorgio
George

c. *Leone apprezzava i vantaggi di se stesso Presidente
Leone appreciated the advantages of himself as President

della Repubblica
of the Republic

However, the full acceptability of (24a), which does not exemplify either a context nor one of the conditions blocking the application of the Possessive Generalization, again stands as a strong contrast to the normal behaviour of the nominals and constitutes an additional problem with respect to those outlined at the beginning of the discussion.

---

[13] Or, as generated directly under N-double-bar.

2.0 Towards an Explanation

From the evidence just reviewed it can be concluded that the Possessive Generalization and connected phenomena do not seem to offer an explanation for the ungrammaticality of (24b), which, as a matter of fact, must ultimately be attributed to binding factors. Furthermore, the acceptability of (24a) also has to be justified in some way. More generally, the failure of this attempt forces us to resort to the other one we considered above, namely, to reinterpret the categorial structure of the sentences so as to meet the Binding Theory requirements. As already pointed out this section is not an easy one to work out because of the numerous problems it raises. Indeed, sentences (24d-g) behave perfectly with respect to both the Binding Theory and the Possessive Generalization as if they were neatly distinct from (24a-c), a fact that renders the task of finding the exact terms of the solution even harder. However, it is reasonable to say that the exceptional behaviour of sentences (24a-c) calls for an equally exceptional solution - and one that may also apply optionally, thus not applying to (24d-g) - this is precisely the state of affairs we expect to find with categorial reinterpretation. In other words, the Binding Theory and the Possessive Generalization requirements can only be met by assuming that in the competence of the speaker the NP headed by *vantaggio* 'advantage' does not function as such any more, at least in cases (24a-c). In this way the binding domain would be the whole sentence for both anaphors and pronominal elements thus justifying the judgements on (24b), and no input for the application of the Possessive Generalization would be available, thus allowing sentences (24a and c).

Of course, although an explanation of this kind seems to be generally correct - to state the existence of mental operations that modify the categorial status of certain strings constitutes a step towards a fuller understanding of what lies beyond the notion of idiomaticity - it is difficult to work out a detailed account of the operations involved in it, in-

cluding justifications of why they can apply to nouns like *vantaggio* 'advantage' but not to others.[14]

I shall leave all these questions open, but, just to conclude this survey on the IPPs like *a vantaggio (di)* 'to (the) advantage of' and by way of simple illustration, let us assume that these IPPs undergo a sort of 'restructuring' rule, a device that has sometimes been used in generative research (even if with great caution) and which consists of an operation having the property of erasing unwanted categorial boundaries and of creating new ones.[15]

In the case of *a vantaggio (di)* 'to (the) advantage of' and other similar expressions, this operation would have the effect of erasing the typical nominal categorial projections of *vantaggio* 'advantage' (namely, NP and under an X-bar interpretation, N-bar - on the notions of X-bar syntax applied to the NP of Italian see Battye 1987). As a consequence of the erasure of the nominal categorial projections, *vantaggio* 'advantage' ceases to be a nominal head and creates a new zero level category X *a vantaggio* 'to (the) advantage' - the restructured sequence - which projects a maximal category XP, as shown in (43): [16]

---

[14] Cf. Higginbotham (1985: 539ff) for observations in this connection made concerning the English idiomatic expressions - or 'semi-productive idioms' as he calls them - like *for someone's sake*.

[15] The restructuring rule has applied to so many different phenomena that it is hardly right to talk of an actual rule in the grammar or of the same rule for each phenomenon. The following is an indicative bibliography on the problem: Longobardi (1979), Manzini (1983), Pollock (1979), Rizzi (1976), (1982), Rouveret and Vergnaud (1980), Hornstein and Weinberg (1981), Zubizarreta (1980).

[16] An alternative account would be erasing the sole maximal projection of the N *vantaggio* 'advantage' thus leaving a reduced category - an N-bar type category in terms of the X-bar theory - which, besides being able to account for the Binding theory facts, could also explain extraction phenomena like **la persona di cui feci ciò a vantaggio* 'the person of whom I-did that to (the) advantage' vs. *la persona a vantaggio di cui feci ciò* 'the person to (the) advantage of whom I-did that' in terms of the 'minimality condition' of Chomsky (1986b). This solution, however, should be worked out in greater detail so as to meet the

(43) ... [XP [X a vantaggio] di NP]

Whatever lexical and categorial value is assigned to X, XP has to be assumed as differing from NP or S so as it may not be considered either a binding domain for anaphors and pronominal elements or an input to the Possessive Generalization, thus accounting for the judgements on the sentences (24a-c). As to sentences (24d-g), it only has to be assumed that the restructuring rule does not apply here, and that the categorial structure as represented in (26) remains intact. This assumption might sound too stipulative, but, in a sense, it is perfectly in keeping with the spirit of restructuring rules, whatever mental operations they may represent and whatever formal developments they may undergo in the future: restructuring should be thought of as an optional device which never affects the lexical component of a given language.

Of course more evidence would be necessary to support a detailed formal proposal about restructuring in cases like these. Surely, expressions like *a vantaggio di* 'to the advantage of' display different behaviours which may call for such an attempt. Some we have already observed at the beginning of this discussion. Others can be added as for instance the following contrast which results unexpectedly under normal analyses:

(44) a. *Di quale ditta l' affare fu fatto [a vantaggio t] ?
of which firm the business was done to (the) advantage

b. Di quale film hai assistito [alla prima
of which film you-have been present at the first

rappresentazione t] ?
showing

Possessive Generalization facts also. In particular, if we adopt it, we should have to assume an operation incorporating the *di* + pronominal/anaphor sequence into the N-bar category, thus treating *vantaggio* as an ergative nominal.

But examples like these suggest there are many possible ways to give a formal status to the idea of restructuring (cf. note 16 for a possible alternative to 43). It is then preferable to keep restructuring as a cover term indicating some sort of categorial modification in certain expressions - something that because of its exceptionality has to be demonstrated and not just hypothesized.

Thus, with this *mise-au-point* in mind, let us turn to the idea that restructuring may be optional. With regard to this it is worth noting that it correlates with adjectival modification in an interesting way: we saw that an adjective like *grande* 'great' cannot modify *vantaggio* 'advantage' when the latter is part of an IPP (cf. example 14 above). However when that IPP contains indications of the absence of Restructuring (i.e. the presence of a possessive adjective) modification with *grande* becomes more tolerable:

(45) a. ?Gianni aveva fatto ciò a suo grande vantaggio
Gianni had done that to his great advantage

b. Gianni aveva fatto ciò a grande vantaggio suo
Gianni had done that to great advantage his

With reference to optionality, it is also worth observing the behaviour of an IPP like *all'infuori (di)* 'with the exception of' which contains a nominal nucleus that does not occur in free contexts any more:

(46) a. Carlo odiava tutti all' infuori di se stesso
Carlo hated everybody with the exception of himself

b. *Carlo$_i$ odiava tutti all' infuori di lui$_i$
Carlo$_i$ hated everyone with the exception of him$_i$

c. Carlo odiava tutti all' infuori di lei
Carlo hated everyone with the exception of her

d *Carlo$_i$ odiava tutti al suo$_{i/j}$ infuori
Carlo$_i$ hated everyone with (the) his$_{i/j}$ exception

e. *Carlo$_i$ odiava tutti all' infuori suo$_{i/j}$
Carlo$_i$ hated everyone with the exception his$_{i/j}$

f. *Carlo odiava tutti al proprio infuori
Carlo hated everyone with his own exception

g. *Carlo odiava tutti all' infuori proprio
Carlo hated everyone with the exception his own

Sentences (46a-c) perfectly match sentences (24a-c) but sentences (46d-g), in contrast to (24d-g), are ungrammatical: this means that with an IPP like *all'infuori (di)* 'with the exception of' the restructuring rule applies obligatorily, but this exactly corresponds to saying that the sequence *all'infuori* 'with exception' belongs to the lexicon in spite of its (partial) analyzability, in other words, it amounts to saying that restructuring itself, in this case, is unnecessary.

The optionality of the restructuring rule, on the other hand, is able to rescue the descriptive and equivocal concept of crystallization to a certain extent: a restructured sequence, because of its resemblance to proper lexical items, is likely to disallow the presence of internal modifiers such as possessives, but a non-restructured one is not, a prediction that, although far from being a necessary one, seems to be perfectly attested in the paradigm (24) and in sentences (44a and b).

3.0 Conclusion

To sum up, the analysis of IPPs like *a vantaggio (di)* 'to (the) advantage of', though still containing many problems which are difficult to solve,[17] seems to answer positively the question we raised at the be-

[17] Besides the problems I have already sketched out, like those regarding the theoretical status of the restructuring rule or the relevance of the thematic structure of the nominals contained in the IPPs, there are many others concerning the behaviour of these IPPs with respect to other classes of phenomena or even concerning different types of behaviour - indeed

mysterious ones - with respect to pronominal and anaphoric possessives. Just to mention some of these, consider the following paradigms:

(i) a. Cesare$_i$ era stato molto ingiusto nei suoi$_{*i/j}$ riguardi
Caesar had been very unfair in (the) his regards

b. Cesare$_i$ era stato molto ingiusto nei riguardi suoi$_{*i/j}$
Caesar had been very unfair in (the) regards his

c. Cesare era stato molto ingiusto nei propri riguardi
Caesar had been very unfair in (the) his-own regards

d. Cesare era stato molto ingiusto nei riguardi propri
Caesar had been very unfair in (the) regards his-own

(ii) a. *Marco si ruppe una gamba per sua colpa
Marco broke (his) leg through his fault

b. Marco si ruppe una gamba per colpa sua
Marco broke (his) leg through fault his

c. *Marco si ruppe una gamba per propria colpa
Marco broke (his) leg through his-own fault

d. (?)Marco si ruppe una gamba per colpa propria
Marco broke (his) leg through fault his-own

(iii) a. *Pietro si ruppe una gamba a sua causa
Pietro broke (his) leg on his account

b. Pietro$_i$ si ruppe una gamba a causa sua$_{*i/j}$
Pietro broke (his) leg on account his

c. *Pietro si ruppe una gamba a propria causa
Pietro broke (his) leg on his-own account

d. ??Pietro si ruppe una gamba a causa propria
Pietro broke (his) leg on account his-own

The indexing in (i) is similar to the one we found in restructuring sequences, but the presence of the possessive should exclude a restructuring rule such as the one we have been assuming. The indexing in (ii) perfectly matches the one we found in non-restructured sequences, but the

ginning, namely, whether there is any sense in speaking of IPPs from a theoretical point of view. The idiosyncratic behaviour of these constructions with respect to the Binding Theory - a fully tested theory, at least in its essentials - compels one to assume some sort of categorial modification which corresponds to the suppression of the functional and lexical properties of the nominal head. This conclusion, although far from being an explanatory and exhaustive one, seems to be able to fix some important points for the empirical and formal identification of these idiomatic constructions and is a methodological step towards a theoretical definition of idiomaticity itself.

REFERENCES

Ambrosini. R. 1987. *Tendenze della linguistica teorica attuale*. Pisa.

Battye. A. 1987. *An Introduction to Italian Syntax*. University of Hull: Department of Italian.

Belletti. A. 1978. Strutture coordinate e possessivi. *Rivista di Grammatica Generativa* 3.127-142.

Bottari. P. 1985. Sintagmi preposizionali locuzionali. *Rivista di Grammatica Generativa* 9/10.143-214.

Burzio. L. 1981. *Intransitive Verbs and Italian Auxiliaries*. PhD dissertation. Cambridge, Massachussetts: MIT.

Chafe. W. 1968. Idiomaticity as an Anomaly in the Chomskyan Paradigm. *Foundations of Language* 4.109-127.

Chomsky. N. 1981. *Lectures on Government and Binding*. Foris: Dordrecht.

Chomsky. N. 1986a. *Knowledge of Language: Its Nature, Origin, and Use*. New York: Praeger.

Chomsky. N. 1986b. *Barriers*. Cambridge, Massachussetts: MIT Press.

Cinque. G. 1980. On Extraction from NP in Italian. *Journal of Italian Linguistics* 5.47-99.

Cinque. G. 1981. Sulla nozione di soggetto di sintagma nominale. *Cultura Neolatina* 41.159-147.

---

impossibility of (ii) (a) and (c) seems to call for a sort of restructuring in any case. Finally, (iii) seems to incorporate the (contradictory) properties of both (i) and (ii), with the additional problem of the uncertainty of judgements on sentence (d).

Fillmore. C. 1968. The Case for Case. in E. Bach and R. Harms. eds. *Universals in Linguistic Theory*. New York: Academic Press.1-88.

Fraser. B. 1970. Idioms within a Transformational Grammar. *Foundations of Language* 6.22-42.

Gaatone. D. 1976. Locutions prépositives et groupes prépositionnels. Observations sur la syntaxe de certains groupes prépositionnels. *Linguistics* 167.15-33.

Gaatone. D. 1981. Les 'locutions verbales': pour quoi faire? *Revue romane* 16.49-73.

Giorgi. A. 1985. *On the Italian Anaphoric System*. Tesi di perfezionamento. Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa.

Giorgi. A. and Longobardi. G. in press. *The Syntax of Noun Phrases: Configuration, Parameters and Empty Categories*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Graffi. G. 1987. *Soggetto strutturale e soggetto tematico*. Paper presented at 'Incontro di Grammatica Generativa'. Trento.

Gross. M. 1981. Les prépositions composées. In C. Schwarze (ed). *Analyse de prépositions*. Tübingen.

Hornstein. N. and Weinberg. A. 1981. Case Theory and Preposition Stranding. *Linguistic Inquiry* 12.55-91.

Higginbotham. J. 1985. On Semantics. *Linguistic Inquiry* 16.547-593.

Katz. J. 1973. Compositionality. Idiomaticity. and Lexical Substitution. In S. R. Anderson and P. Kiparsky. eds. *A Festschrift for Morris Halle*. New York: Academic Press. 357-376.

Longobardi. G. 1979. Postille alla regola di ristrutturazione. *Rivista di Grammatica Generativa* 4.213-228.

Manzini. R. 1983. *Restructuring and Reanalysis*. PhD dissertation. Cambridge, Massachussetts: MIT.

Pesetsky. D. 1982. *Paths and Categories*. PhD dissertation. Cambridge, Massachussetts: MIT.

Pollock. J-Y. 1979. Réanalyse et constructions impersonnelles. *Recherches Linguistiques* 8.72-130.

Quirk. R., Greenbaum. S., Leech G. and Svartvik. J. 1972. *A Grammar of Contemporary English*. London: Longman.

Radford. A. 1981. *Transformational Syntax: A Student's Guide to Chomsky's Extended Standard Theory*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Regula. M. and Jernej. J. 1965. *Grammatica italiana descrittiva su basi storiche e psicologiche.* Bern/Munich.

Rizzi. L. 1976. Ristrutturazione. *Rivista di Grammatica Generativa* 1.1-54.

Rizzi. L. 1982. *Issues in Italian Syntax.* Dordrecht: Foris.

Rouveret. A. and Vergnaud. J-R. 1980. Specifying Reference to Subject. *Linguistic Inquiry* 11.97-202.

Ruwet. N. 1983. Du bon usage des expressions idiomatiques dans l'argumentation en syntaxe générative. *Recherches Linguistiques* 11.5-84.

Zubizarreta. M-L. 1980. Pour une restructuration thématique. *Recherches Linguistiques* 9.141-187.